



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. FARHAT AYESHA OF ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN, ON AGENDA ITEM 13(D): HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, DURING THE GENERAL SEGMENT OF THE 2007 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECOSOC (Geneva, 23 July 2007)**

**Mr. President,**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Group of 77 and China under Agenda item 13(d) on Human Settlements.

2. We thank the Secretary General for his Report on “Coordinated Implementation of the Habitat Agenda”.

3. The growing importance and urgent need to focus on and address challenges of urbanization has never been greater as it is today. Mainly because and as pertinently noted in the Secretary General’s Report as well, that half of humanity will be living in towns and cities (for the first time in the history in 2007) and is projected to increase to two thirds by 2030. The estimates indicate that 1 billion people in the developing world are currently living in slums and in cities.

4. With the increase in the number of people living in urban areas, growth of slums and slum dwellers is accelerating exponentially. The vast majority of these lack safe housing, access to water and sanitation, modern energy supply and waste collection and disposal. Urbanization also brings a wide range of social, economic and environmental problems including in consumption and production patterns.

5. The challenge of sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter for all requires our urgent attention, especially as it is closely intertwined with poverty, employment, transportation and the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation.

6. Recognizing the urgency involved our leaders at the 2005 World Summit had also committed themselves to achieving significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020. They also recognized the urgent need for the provision of increased resources for affordable housing and housing-related infrastructure, prioritizing slum prevention and slum upgrading, and encouraged support for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlement Foundation and its Slum Upgrading Facility.

7. It is, therefore, imperative for the international community to support the implementation of the Habitat agenda as it focuses on critical aspects of human livelihoods, basic needs and, poverty eradication.

8. Simultaneously, the international community should also give due attention to the continuing challenge of human settlements, including the provision of the necessary means of implementation, through improved quality and quantity of ODA, transfer of technology, capacity building, enhanced market access, increased foreign direct investments to the developing countries and resolving their external debt problems.

**Mr. President,**

9. The G-77 and China also takes note of the various efforts already underway and the

achievements made in the 21st session of UNHABITAT Governing Council, including the consensus resolutions on Guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities, Guiding principles on access to basic services for all, Urban Youth Development, Women's land and property rights and access to finance, African fund/ financing mechanism on slum prevention and upgrading. We do hope that the approval of the biennial work programme and budget and the efforts for strengthening the UN-Habitat and Human settlements Foundation will facilitate the overall implementation of the Habitat agenda.

10. The work of UN-Habitat and other actors in the area of Human Settlements plays a very important role in poverty reduction and in helping countries achieve sustained economic growth and Sustainable Development including MDGs. The UH-HABITAT programmes in the areas of shelter, water and sanitation are particularly helpful in this regard.

11. An appropriate response to human settlements can also be fast-tracked through building adequate capacity at regional and national levels. This can be done partly through sharing of experiences, common regional policy formulation and implementation within the context of the Habitat Agenda and MDGs. In this context, we support the on-going ministerial meetings at the regional level, on housing and urban development, which are organized in close collaboration with regional commissions. These meetings focus on mainstreaming the urban dimension of implementing the Habitat Agenda and related internationally agreed development goals.

12. In view of the above, UN-HABITAT and all development partners should play a major role in strengthening the efforts of Governments of the developing countries in sharpening the focus on key determinants to slum improvement, slum prevention and urban poverty reduction. This should include developing strategic partnerships to provide the requisite capacity building support and mobilization and leveraging of international and domestic resources for investing in pro-poor housing and related infrastructure and services.

I thank you.

